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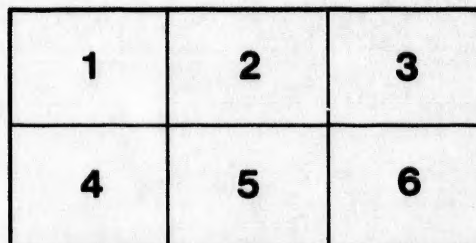
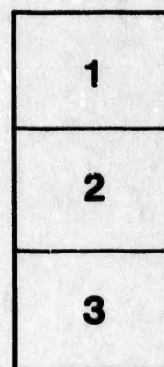
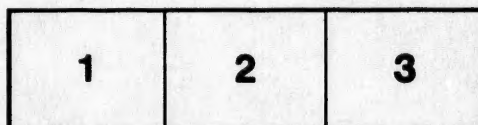
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LECTURE

CATHOLIC INSTITUTE

BY EDMUND MATTHEW, A. M.

(President)

NEW YORK

CATHOLIC INSTITUTE

1860

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THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY
IN ENGLAND :

A L E C T U R E

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE HALIFAX CATHOLIC INSTITUTE,

ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 16TH, 1859.

BY EDMUND MATURIN, A. M.,

(President.)

HALIFAX, N. S.

PRINTED FOR THE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE,

By Compton & Bowden.

1859.

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THE OFFICE OF CHRISTIANITY
IN ENGLAND

A LECTURE

delivered at the

THE HALLS OF THE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE

ON THE 14TH OF NOVEMBER 1884

BY EDWARD ALLEN

(The Rev.)

LONDON: N. B.

AND THE CATHOLIC INSTITUTE

1884

THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND.

THE subject to which I propose to direct your attention this evening is the Origin and early History of Christianity in England, and I intend to consider these events chiefly with reference to the *source* from which the ancient Church of England derived her religion, the *time* at which the Gospel was first preached in the country, the *individuals* by whom it was propagated, and the general character of the *doctrines* which they taught. Now, this is evidently an inquiry of great importance and deep interest to us all, as Christians, and as subjects of the British Crown—not merely as illustrative of a most instructive branch of antiquarian research and national history, but also, and chiefly, as tending to throw some additional light on the great controversy which has unhappily divided the Christian world for the last three hundred years. I must beg to observe, however, that it is not my intention to enter into any Theological discussion on the present occasion, and while I trust that I shall ever be ready to maintain and defend the great principles of the Catholic Faith with firmness and decision, I hope that I shall always be enabled to do so in a spirit of Christian meekness and gentleness, and to avoid, as far as possible, every expression of opinion that might be calculated to wound the feelings, or offend the prejudices, of those who are still separated from the unity of the Catholic Church. My object, then, is rather of an *historical* than of a *controversial* nature—it is to deal with *facts*, rather than with *principles*, and I wish to lay before you, with all due impartiality, a plain and unvarnished statement of the principal evidence that relates to the subject before us, with the view of assisting you in arriving at a right conclusion. I must confess, indeed, that I am utterly incapable of attempting any lofty flights of eloquence, with which an enrap-

tured audience is frequently delighted and captivated, while listening to the burning words of some gifted orator. I cannot hope to succeed in inspiring your hearts with any noble sentiments of enthusiasm, or in kindling a flame of holy devotion in your souls, by any feeble efforts of mine upon your feelings and imaginations—I must entirely disclaim the possession of any such enviable talents as these, and it is not by any appeals of this kind that I expect to produce any degree of conviction in your minds, but by a simple reference to historical events and transactions, derived from the authentic records of Christian antiquity. I fear, indeed, that the whole inquiry will appear very dry and unattractive to most of you; but this must arise, in a great measure, from the very nature of the case, and I must therefore request your patient attention while I endeavor to bring before you some important facts and documents relating to this subject, and to estimate the real value of the evidence which is founded on their collective testimonies.

But first, it may be proper to make some observations on the general state of the question, with reference to the different opinions which have been held by learned men, and the nature of the arguments by which these opinions have been supported. There can be no doubt that those who have been engaged in the investigation of this and every other subject of Ecclesiastical history, have frequently allowed their minds to be very much influenced by the force of religious prejudice, and their own different views of Christian doctrine, instead of fairly weighing the evidence of historical testimony in an impartial scale. Hence we find that, where history is silent, plausible conjectures are often substituted for positive facts, and the remotest intimations magnified into express assertions, while, in the absence of direct proofs, the whole course of events is so shaped and represented as to bear a perfect conformity with the Theological system of the individual writer, or of the Church to which he belongs. All classes of professing Christians are, of course, fully sensible of the great importance of obtaining the sanction of antiquity for their respective creeds, and therefore there is naturally a strong temptation to

misrepresent the facts of history by suppressing those which are unfavorable to their cause, and dwelling exclusively on those which appear to afford a particular support. It is very true, indeed, that antiquity alone is not sufficient to establish the truth of any doctrine or practice, as we all know that religious error is of very ancient date, and almost coeval with the existence of Christianity itself—and therefore it is not enough to prove that any doctrine has been held in early times, but it must be proved to have been held, not by any heretical sects, nor by any individual Christians as a private opinion, but by the Universal Church of God as an article of faith. We therefore receive every doctrine of the Catholic Faith, not merely on account of its *antiquity*—but on account of the divine *authority* on which it rests, as proposed to us by the voice of the Church, by which alone we can infallibly distinguish between all religious truth and error. It must be admitted, however, that there can be, properly speaking, no new discovery in religion—whatever can be proved to be a new doctrine is certainly false—and though, whatever is ancient is not necessarily true, yet, whatever is true is certainly ancient. It is this consideration which at once refutes the claims of every new religious sect, and which proves their system to be only a human invention, and a total corruption of “the faith once delivered to the Saints.” The importance of this principle has been felt and applied, not only with reference to the general case of the history of Christianity throughout the world, but also with reference to the particular case of the introduction of Christianity into England, and the circumstances connected with the foundation of the Christian Church in that country. I need scarcely observe that this is entirely an open question, as the Church does not pronounce any decision on such matters of fact, which are properly to be ascertained by the evidence of testimony; and therefore different views may fairly be held by Catholics as well as by Protestants, on this as well as all other historical questions. It is necessary to remind you, that all our information on these subjects must be derived from the accounts of ancient writers, and especially of those who lived nearest the times and places in which the events occurred,

and who enjoyed the best opportunities of ascertaining the real facts, and of transmitting them to posterity with accuracy and fidelity. We must remember that the statement of a modern writer is of no value whatever, unless it can be proved to have been derived from some authentic source of information. There is no one living in the world now, who knows anything about events which happened 100 years ago—he must take them entirely on the testimony of others, as credible witnesses to the fact; and such is the case, in a much greater degree, with regard to the early history of Christianity in every country, as we depend entirely on the evidence of ancient Authors, or the accounts handed down by well-authenticated traditions, for all that we know on the subject. Now the materials that relate to the early Church History of England are remarkably few and brief—and therefore it cannot be surprising that, under such circumstances, various theories should be held, and different conclusions adopted, even by those who have investigated the subject with the most laborious research.

It is well known that the ancient inhabitants of Britain, (as the country was then called, long before it had received the name of England) were Pagan Idolaters, ignorant of the true God, and involved in the most degrading superstition, under the government of their Heathen Priests, who are known by the title of the Druids. It is generally agreed, however, that Christianity was originally introduced into the country at a very early period—and that it was subsequently preached with greater success to the Anglo-Saxon nation by missionaries sent from Rome, and further, it is universally admitted that the whole Roman Catholic system was fully adopted by the Church of England for several centuries before the Reformation, when a total change of religion was established by the civil authority. So far, then, the facts of the case are perfectly clear—but there are several important points of detail, on which modern writers are greatly divided. It is generally held by Protestant historians, that the Gospel was preached in England in the First Century of the Christian Era, either by one of the Apostles, or by some of their immediate successors—that its origin had no connexion with Rome, and that the Ancient British

Church did not acknowledge the Supremacy of the Pope, and was altogether independent of the Apostolic See—that in doctrines and practice she was essentially Protestant, until she became gradually infected with Roman errors and corruptions, and that it was not till after a long and ineffectual resistance that she finally submitted to the authority of Rome—and thus, according to this theory, the Reformation was simply the rejection of the innovations and superstitions of the Middle Ages, and a restoration of the Church to her primitive purity and national independence. On the other hand, it is generally maintained by Catholics, that such a view is entirely an historical fiction, invented in modern times to justify the proceedings of the Reformation, and deriving no support from the authentic monuments of Christian antiquity. Accordingly it is held that there is no sufficient evidence to prove that any Christian Church was founded in England before the latter end of the Second Century, when the Gospel of Christ was preached in that country by missionaries sent by the Pope—and there is ample testimony to show that the religion thus established by the authority of the See of Rome continued the same in doctrine and worship till the period of the Reformation—and is essentially the same with the system of the Roman Catholic Church at the present day. You will perceive at once, then, the great importance of this inquiry—for if it be really true that the Ancient British Church was originally independent of the See of Rome, then it will follow that the modern Church of England is capable, to a certain extent, of a satisfactory defence in rejecting the Supremacy of the Pope, as the English Reformation will then appear to be, not a *separation* from the Catholic Church, but a *restoration* of the national Church to her primitive position, though it must be observed, that after all, the present Established Church has no connexion with the early *British* as she derives her succession entirely through the *Anglo-Saxon* Hierarchy, founded by the Pope.

Such, then, are the two principal views that have been held on this subject, but there are some other opinions which have been advanced by various individual writers, both among Catholics and

Protestants, to which I shall briefly allude, though they are now generally rejected by all the great historians of the Church.

1st.—One of these opinions is, that St. Peter himself was the Apostle of England, and the founder of the British Church. This opinion is derived almost entirely from the statement of Simeon Metaphrastes, a Greek Ecclesiastical writer of the Tenth Century, who, in his work on the “Lives of the Saints,” referring to the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, on the 29th June, relates that “Peter remained in Britain for some time, and attracted many nations to the Faith of Christ, and at last, when he had enlightened many with the Word of grace, and founded Churches, and ordained Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, he returned to Rome in the 12th year of Nero*.” Perhaps the chief recommendation of this opinion is, that it was adopted by the illustrious Cardinal Baronius himself, in his immortal “Ecclesiastical Annals†,” under the year of our Lord 46, and it was strenuously maintained by the celebrated Father Parsons, in his learned “Treatise of the Three Conversions of England‡.” But the Cardinal, in another passage, speaks in a very disparaging manner of the general credit of Metaphrastes, and Dr. Lingard pronounces him to be a “treacherous authority.” Besides, his testimony is nearly 1000 years too late, as it does not appear that any other writer before him ever held such a view, as the passage of Eusebius, to which he refers, is not to be found in the works of that historian.

2nd.—Some ancient martyrologists have stated that the Apostle James, the brother of St. John, preached the Gospel in England as well as in Spain§. But these writers are generally of little authority, and the account seems utterly irreconcilable with the sacred history, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles||, from which it appears that St. James suffered martyrdom at Jerusalem, under Herod Agrippa, about A. D. 44, and before the dispersion of the Apostles throughout the world.

* Usserii Brit. Eccles. Antiq. pp. 7, 743, (4to. Dub. 1639.)

† Baronii Annal Eccles. Tom. I., p. 537.

‡ Three Conversions, Part I., p. 7, (fol. 1688.

§ Vid. Usser. p. 5.

|| Acts xii. 1, 2.

3rd.—Another of the Apostles has also been claimed for England, St. Simon Zelotes, or Simon the Canaanite. This circumstance is mentioned, but it does not appear on what authority, by a learned Greek Author, Nicephorus Callisti, who lived in the 14th Century. He says that St. Simon “entered into the Western Ocean, and preached the Gospel in the British Islands*.” It is further stated in the Synopsis ascribed to Dorotheus, that St. Simon was crucified in Britain†, and the same circumstances are also mentioned in the Greek Menologies. But this account is entirely contrary to the best authorities, including the Roman Breviary and Martyrology, and it is not entitled to the slightest degree of credit.

4th.—There was another opinion, which was at one time very popular with British historians, that Christianity was planted in England by Joseph of Arimathea, and twelve other Missionaries, who were sent for that purpose by St. Philip the Apostle, who is said to have been then in France. This tradition seems to be chiefly founded on the statement of William of Malmesbury, who lived in the 12th Century, and who gives a full account of all the particulars in his “Antiquities of the Church of Glastonbury,” his object being to show that Joseph was the founder of that celebrated Abbey and Church‡. He states this event to have taken place in the year of our Lord 63, and of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin the 15th year. Time will not allow me to enter further into this remarkable document, but it is a curious fact, that the opinion itself seems to have been the general belief of the English Church for several ages, and we have a striking confirmation of this in the circumstance that it was insisted on by the English Ambassadors at some of the great Councils of the Church in the 15th Century, and particularly at the Council of Basil, to justify them in their claim of precedence, against the pretensions of the crowns of France and Spain§. It is remarked by Bishop Short, that “the fable about Joseph of Arimathea, and

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. cap. 40, (Apud Usser. pp. 7, 740.)

† Vid. Cave, Script. Eccles. Part I., p. 122, (Ed. 1683.)

‡ Usser. p. 12. Stillington's Orig. Brit. p. 6, (Ed. 1685.) Collier's Eccles. Hist.

Vol. I., p. 7, (Ed. 1708.)

§ Fuller's Church History, Vol. IV. p. 180. (Ed. 1845.)

his having founded Glastonbury Abbey, would have been unworthy of notice, had not Queen Elizabeth and Archbishop Parker ventured to claim him as the first Preacher of Christianity in England, but the absurdity of the whole story is fully established by Stillingfleet*."

But all these opinions—relative to St. Peter, St. James, St. Simon, and Joseph of Arimathea—are totally unsupported by the most ancient authorities, and therefore must be regarded as traditionary legends of later times, invented to supply the want of historical evidence, and to raise the character of the British Church for its Apostolical antiquity.

Now the opinion which has prevailed most extensively among Protestant Divines since the Reformation, is that the Gospel of Christ was first preached in England by the Apostle Paul, who is therefore regarded by them as the founder of the British Church. They suppose that this event took place between the period of his first and second imprisonments at Rome, and shortly before his martyrdom. This opinion has been adopted, as a probable conjecture, by Stillingfleet†, Cave‡, Collier§, and other distinguished Authors, but it has been strongly defended by the late learned Dr. Burgess, Bishop of Salisbury, who carried his views so far as to maintain that "*the Church of Britain was fully established before the Church of Rome*," and he endeavored to prove it by the assertion that "St. Paul appointed the first Bishop or Bishop, and other Ministers of the Church" in England, whereas he says that "Linus, the first Bishop of Rome, was appointed by the joint-authority of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the year of their martyrdom, and therefore after St. Paul's return from Britain||." I need not stop here to show that these alleged facts are purely imaginary, as it is generally admitted that the story of Aristobulus being appointed Bishop in England is entirely fabulous**,

* Short's Church of England, p. 3, (5th Ed.)

† Orig. Brit. p. 45.

‡ "Lives of the Apostles," p. 86, (Ed. 1702.)

§ Eccles. Hist. vol. I., p. 6.

|| Churchman Armed, Vol. II. p. 147.

** Usser. pp. 2, 744; Collier, Vol. I, p. 3. Lingard's Anglo-Saxon Church, Vol. I., p. 355, (Ed. 1845.)

and that the statement of Linus being the first Bishop of Rome, to the exclusion of St. Peter, is merely founded on a mistaken interpretation of a single passage in St. Irenæus*, as well as contrary to the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

Such, then, are the principal opinions which have been held as to the origin of Christianity in England, and we shall now proceed to consider the historical evidence relating to the subject, as founded on the statements of the Christian Fathers, and other ancient writers, from whom alone we can obtain any satisfactory information with respect to the early progress of our holy Religion.

It must be observed, then, that there are two different periods to which our inquiries are to be directed—the British, and the Saxon—the one, relating to the first propagation of the Christian Faith in England among the native Britons, and the other, relating to the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons at the end of the 6th Century. The latter is a well known and clearly defined historical event, but there is a considerable degree of difficulty in determining with precision and certainty various important circumstances connected with the former.

I. We shall therefore carefully examine the original authorities which appear to contain any allusion to the conversion of Britain, quoting the statement of each successive Author in the regular order of time.

1. The earliest writer who has been supposed to refer to this subject is St. Clement I., who is generally considered as the fourth Pope or Bishop of Rome, in the latter end of the First Century. I do not think, indeed, that the passage can be properly understood with reference to England, but I quote it, as it has been much relied on in proof of the Pauline origin of the British Church. St. Clement, after alluding to the martyrdom of Saint Peter, thus refers to the great Apostle of the Gentiles—"Paul obtained the reward of patience, having been thrown into prison seven times, beaten with rods, and stoned, and having been a preacher in the East and in the West, received the illustrious honor of his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole

† Contra Horeses Lib III. cap. iii. 3., p. 176 (Ed. Bened.)

world, and having come to the *boundary of the West*, and suffered martyrdom under our rulers, thus departed from the world, and went to the holy place*." Much stress has been laid on the expression, the "*boundary of the West*," as describing the extent of St. Paul's travels, from which it has been inferred that England must be included in this description, as being the utmost boundary of the world known to the ancient Romans. Indeed, Bishop Burgess speaks of this passage as "the first and most important testimony" in favor of St. Paul's journey to Britain, and he refers to various parallel passages in other writers, in which a similar expression is used with reference to the inhabitants of Spain, Gaul, and Britain†. But, even if such passages can be found, they would not prove to *which* of the three countries St. Clement refers, and besides, it must be remarked, that there is not a single writer who employs exactly the same expression with that before us—not one of them has any direct reference to the point, and therefore no argument whatever can be founded on the use of such a vague and indefinite phrase. Indeed, if it proves any thing conclusive, it evidently *proves too much*, for if it be understood in its strictly literal sense, it will include *Ireland*, which is farther West than England—nay more, it will include the *Western Continent* itself, and thus it might be plausibly argued that St. Paul preached the Gospel in Ireland and in America, and yet I am not aware that such an honor has ever been claimed by either of these countries in favor of their respective Churches.

In explanation of this phrase, we are indeed referred to an expression in the work of St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in the latter part of the second Century. It is that remarkable passage in which he describes the universal agreement in the profession of one faith, as held by "the Church scattered throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth," and shortly afterwards more particularly refers to "the Churches in Germany, Iberia, and among the Celts‡." "Now," says the Bishop, "by the

* Clem. Epist. ad Cor. p. 3. (4to. Oxon. 1633.)

† Churchman Armed, Vol. II., p. 342.

‡ Lib. I. cap. x. 1, 2, pp. 48, 49.

Celts were meant the people of Germany, Gaul, and Britain." But here again, if this explanation were correct, it would not establish the point, because it will not prove to which of these three countries this expression is here applied. It does not appear, however, that the Britons were generally included among the Celtic nations by the ancients. Grabe, the learned Protestant Editor of this Father, supposes the Celts to have been inhabitants of Gaul, about Lyons, as Irenæus says of himself, in his Preface, "We live among the Celts*." Indeed, Julius Cæsar expressly describes the Celts as one of the three nations into which Gaul was divided in his time†, and in the corrected Latin version of Irenæus, the word is translated by the name of Gaul in both the passages just quoted‡. There is no support, therefore, to be derived from this expression in favor of the existence of the British Church at this early period.

But another illustration of St. Clement's words is quoted by Bishop Burgess from St. Jerome, who lived 300 years afterwards, and who states in his "Treatise on Illustrious Men," that St. Paul was released from prison "that the Gospel might be preached by him also in the Western parts§," and again in his "Commentary on Amos," he says that St. Paul was "called by God, and sent forth to preach with the whole world before him, that he preached from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and that, wishing not to build upon another man's foundation, he directed his journey towards Spain, running in imitation of his Lord, the Sun of Righteousness, his course from the Red Sea, or rather from the Eastern to the Western Ocean||." Such is St. Jerome's account, but surely there is nothing said here about England, directly or indirectly. "For certainly" it has been well remarked, "it was possible for the Apostle to preach in the West, as he had done in the East, without preaching in Britain; and also possible for him to travel from the Red Sea to the Western coast of Spain, without passing

* Lib. I. Præf. 3, p. 4.

† De Bello Gallico, Lib. I, 1.

‡ Ed. Stieren, pp. 9, 122. (Tom. I. 8vo. Lips 1863.)

|| S. Hieron. Opp. Tom. II., p. 838, (Ed. Vallars.)

* Ibid. Tom. VI., p. 290.

through Britain.** St. Jerome does, indeed, make some allusion to this subject in another passage, in one of his Epistles, in which he says that "the way to heaven is open from Britain as well as from Jerusalem†," but he does not refer to any connexion between the British Church and St. Paul or any of the Apostles.

As to the precise locality indicated by the "boundary of the West," it seems most probable that it refers to Spain, according to Bishop Pearson's interpretation‡, as we find that St. Paul himself, in his Epistle to the Romans, refers to his intended journey into Spain by way of Rome§, and we have the distinct testimony of the Fathers||, that he did penetrate into Spain, which might properly be understood by this expression, because its Western shore is washed by the waters of the Atlantic, although the learned Dr. Lingard is of opinion that Rome itself is the place intended, "because Rome lies on the Western coast of Italy, and because it was to Rome that St. Paul came, and at Rome that he suffered martyrdom**."

2. We now come to the earliest direct allusion to the conversion of Britain, to be found in the writings of any ancient Author. It is the testimony of Tertullian, the first of the Latin Fathers, who lived in the beginning of the Third Century, and the Treatise "against the Jews," in which the passage occurs, is said to have been written in the year 209. He is there describing the supernatural effects of Christianity in the world, and among other nations which were converted to the Christian Faith he particularly includes "all the ends of Spain, and the different nations of Gaul, and the parts of *Britain* inaccessible to the Romans, but subject to Christ . . . in all which places the name of Christ reigns." And again, shortly afterwards, he says—" *Britain* is enclosed within the compass of the ocean . . . but the kingdom and name of Christ is extended every where, is believed every where, is worshipped by all the nations enumerated

* Lingard, Vol. I. p. 354.

† S. Hieron. Opp. Tom. I. p. 103.

‡ Annal. Paul, (Apud Enchir. Theol., Vol. I, p. 373. Ed. 1825.)

§ Rom. xv. 24.

|| Athanasius, Cyril, Epiphanius, Jerome, Chrysostom, Theodoret.

** Vol. I, p. 353.

above, reigns every where . . . equal among all, a King among all, a Judge among all, God and Lord among all*." From this passage, then, we learn for the first time, that the Christian Religion had been received in Britain, and had made some progress in that country, in the beginning of the Third Century—but how long before that time, or by whom the British Church was founded, we have no information whatever given by this author. With reference to the expression about the "parts of Britain, inaccessible to the Romans"—an argument has been founded on these words by Bishop Hopkins, in opposition to the Roman origin of the British Church. He says—"There is the positive testimony that however, or by whomsoever, the Church was first planted in Britain, which is a matter of uncertainty, it was *not planted by a Missionary from Rome* †." Now it is evident that such an inference cannot be fairly drawn from the text. It is perfectly clear that Tertullian, in referring to the Romans, is not alluding to Roman *Missionaries*, but to the Roman *armies*—he is contrasting the triumphs of the Gospel with the success of the Roman power, when he speaks of those parts of the country being "subject to Christ," though "inaccessible to the Romans"—and therefore it cannot be supposed that he is referring to the place from which the individual Missionaries came, but to the effects of their preaching upon the British people.

3. The next remarkable testimony is that of Origen, who flourished a few years after the time of Tertullian. In his 4th Homily on Ezechiel, he is referring to the wonderful propagation of Christianity in the world, and he uses the following language—"The earth rejoiced at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing it was honored with sustaining the Son of God. Why is it necessary to speak of the Apostles and Prophets, when it is written of the coming of the Lord, 'the whole earth shouts with joy.' Even the miserable Jews confess that these things are spoken of the presence of Christ, but they foolishly are ignorant of the Person, when they see the things accomplished, which have

* Tertull. Opp. Tom II., pp. 290, 292. (Ed. Semler.)

† Refutation of Milner, Vol. I., p. 316. (2nd Ed.)

been foretold. For when did the *land of Britain* agree in the religion of One God before the coming of Christ? When did the land of the Moors? When did the whole world? But now, on account of the Churches, which occupy the ends of the world, the whole earth shouts with joy*." There is another allusion to this subject in the works of Origen. It is in his 6th Homily on St. Luke, in which he says—"The power of our Lord and Saviour with those who are even divided from our world in *Britain*,† with those who are in Mauritania, and with all those under the Sun, who believe in His name†."

4. We have now to consider a very important testimony—that of Eusebius, the first great Ecclesiastical Historian of the Christian Church, who lived in the early part of the Fourth Century. His evidence is perhaps the strongest, that can be alleged in favor of the opinion, that the Gospel was preached in Britain by some of the Apostles; indeed it is often positively stated that he asserts the fact, and yet it will be found that there is no real authority for such a statement, it is remarkable that the passage occurs, not in his "*Ecclesiastical History*," in which he makes no allusion to Britain, but in his "*Evangelical Demonstration*," in which he undertakes to prove the truth of Christianity from the manner of its diffusion throughout the world. His argument is, that its founders, whom he describes as the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy Disciples, were personally unfit, as unlearned and ignorant men, to attempt such an arduous task as that of establishing a new religion in the world, and bringing over all nations to their faith, and therefore he concludes that the success of Christianity cannot be accounted for on any other principle than that of its divine origin, and then he says—"it was indeed possible that they might flatter themselves with the hope of success among their own countrymen, but that they should aspire moreover to the conversion of the whole human race—that, dividing the earth among them, they should have taken, for their several portions, some the Empire of the Romans, and some that of the Armenians—others

* Origenis Opp. Tom. III. p. 370. (Ed. Bened).

† Ibid. p. 939.‡

the nation of the Parthians, and then again that of the Scythians, moreover that some individuals should have gone even to the very extremities of the earth, and have penetrated into the country of the Indians, and *others have passed over the Ocean to those called the British Islands—all this*" he says, "is what appears to me to be beyond any human power to accomplish,"* &c. Now, it should be remarked that this statement is far too general to admit of any particular application to individuals, as it refers to the whole number of *Eighty-two persons*—the Twelve and the Seventy—and if it were strictly interpreted with reference to them, it would not include even St. Paul himself, for we all know that he did not belong to either of these two classes, having been called to the Apostolic office after the appointment of this number, and therefore, if understood in this sense, it would overturn the hypothesis of St. Paul being the founder of the British Church. Nor can this passage be explained as including *any* of the Apostles with reference to Britain, for then it would be inconsistent with the statement of Eusebius himself, in the 3rd Book of his "Ecclesiastical History," in which he speaks of the different places in which the Apostles preached, and says that Thomas carried the knowledge of the Gospel to Parthia, Andrew to Scythia, John to Asia, and Peter to Rome†; he accounts for *these four* alone, and thus, by his silence as to the labors of the others, he shows that he had received no further information on the subject. It is evident, then, that he is not speaking here with the strict accuracy of historical testimony, but rather in the language of rhetorical amplification, as including in this comprehensive description, not only the persons of whom he spoke in the beginning of the passage, but also their companions and successors as one collective body, united in the great work of promoting the conversion of the world to the faith of Christ.

5. Our next witness on this point shall be the eloquent St. Chrysostom, one of the most celebrated of all the Fathers, who flourished during the latter end of the Fourth Century. In his

* Dem. Evang. Lib. III. cap. 7, p. 112, (Par. 1628.)

† Eccles. Hist. Lib. III. cap. 1, p. 132, (Francof. 1822.)

Treatise "on the Divinity of Christ," he is commenting on the great promise—"Upon this Rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,"—and then he thus proceeds—"Think how great a thing it is to have filled the whole world in so short a time, to have converted so many nations, to have persuaded the people to renounce the customs of their fathers, and to give up their rooted habits, to forsake the tyranny of pleasure and the power of sin, to destroy their altars, temples, idols, mysteries, and profane feasts, and every where to erect altars, in the country of the Romans, Persians, Scythians, Moors, and Indians—what do I say?—even beyond the limits of our habitable world, for even the *British Islands*, which is situated beyond this Sea, and in the very Ocean, have felt the power of the Word, for even there also *Churches and altars have been erected.*"* This passage, indeed, requires no further comment. It describes, in glowing language, the triumphs of Christianity throughout the world—and how, instead of the demolished temples and altars of Pagan idolatry, Christian Churches and altars have been erected for the worship of the One True God, and for the celebration of the One True Sacrifice, even in the *British Islands*.

There is another remarkable passage in the works of St. Chrysostom, which relates to the same subject. It occurs in his Treatise "on the benefit of the study of Holy Scripture", in which he uses the following language—"Though thou shouldst go to the Indians, whom the rising sun first beholds, though thou shouldst go to the Ocean, and even to the very *British Islands*—though thou shouldst sail to the Euxine Sea—though thou shouldst go the Southern parts of the world—thou shouldst hear all men everywhere philosophising of the things of Scripture, with a different voice indeed, but not with a different faith—with a discordant language, but with a harmonious sentiment."†

3. The next remarkable testimony is that of Theodoret, who flourished shortly before the middle of the Fifth Century. Referring to the extraordinary success of Christianity, he says, that

* S. Chrysostomi Opp. Tom. I. p. 575, (Ed. Bed.)

† Ibid. Tom. III. p. 71.

"our fishermen and publicans, and the tent-maker, brought the law of the Gospel to all men—and persuaded not only the Romans and the subjects of Rome, but the Scythians and Sauromates, the Indians and Seres, the Hircanians and Bactrians, the Britons, Cimbrians, and Germans, and, in a word, every nation and every race of men, to adopt the laws of the Crucified One."* This passage is of great importance, as the real meaning of it has been very much misunderstood and misrepresented. It is, indeed, a striking instance of the necessity of examining the statements of the Fathers, as to facts as well as doctrines, in their *whole context*, and not merely in *detached quotations*. Now, it is very commonly said, on the authority of this passage, that Theodoret expressly asserts that St. Paul preached the Gospel in Britain, and thus mistakes in our Church history are perpetuated by being copied from one writer to another, without reference to the original words of the Author himself. It is certain, however, that he says no such thing. He speaks, indeed, of "the tent-maker," who is supposed to be St. Paul, but he speaks of him as associated with the other Apostles, whom he describes as "fishermen and publicans," and not in connexion with Britain alone, but with all the other countries there enumerated. Nor does he speak of the conversion of these nations as the effect of the *personal labors* of the Apostles among them, but rather of the *general doctrines* of Christianity as taught by them. It is evident, then, that Theodoret does not refer to any particular connexion between Britain and St. Paul, or indeed any other of the Apostles. And, in fact, he explains his own meaning shortly afterwards, for he expressly states that it was "after the death of the Apostles themselves that the laws of the Gospel were established among the Persians, Scythians, and other barbarous nations"—among whom the Britons of that period must certainly be included.

But there is another passage in this author, on which great stress has been laid, and it is really surprising to find how many learned men have been carried away by the slightest appearance of support for a favorite theory. Theodoret, in explaining the

* Theodoret Opp. Tom. IV. p. 610. (Par. 1642.)

116th Psalm, says that St. Paul "after he left Italy, went to Spain and brought salvation to the Islands lying in the Sea"*—and from this expression it has been confidently argued that the British Islands must be here intended. I may observe, however, that Bp. Stillingfleet†, Bp. Burgess‡, Bp. Short§, and others, have given us an incorrect translation of this passage, by rendering the word "ocean" instead of "sea." And it so happens, that in the very context, Theodoret particularly mentions Crete§, as one of the Islands referred to, from which it is evident, that he is alluding to the *Mediterranean Sea*, and not to the *Atlantic Ocean*. Bp. Burgess, indeed, quotes St. Chrysostom and Nicephorus as proving that this expression relates to the British Islands; but both these authorities refute his own interpretation, as they expressly employ the term "Ocean" (which is also used by Eusebius in the same sense) as distinguished from the "Sea"—and St. Chrysostom clearly states the same distinction between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, in the passage already quoted. There is, therefore, no support whatever to be derived from this expression, in favor of the mission of St. Paul, or any of the Apostles, to Britain.

7. There is another ancient writer, who lived a few years after Theodoret, who makes a brief allusion to this subject. It is Arnobius, the younger, who, in his Comment on the 147th Psalm, gives the following exposition—"His Word runneth so swiftly that when for so many thousand years God was known in Judea alone, now, within a few years, he is neither unknown to the very Indians in the East, nor to the very *Britons* in the West."¶

8. But there is one more authority which has been alleged to prove that St. Paul made a voyage to Britain. It is that of Venantius Fortunatus, a Poet of the Sixth Century, who is supposed to refer to this circumstance, in a poetical composition, in which he speaks of Paul "crossing the Ocean to the *land of the Britons*,"

* Theodoret Opp. Tom. I. p. 871.

† Orig. Brit. p. 37.

‡ Churchman Armed, vol. II. p. 344.

§ Church of England, p. 2.

§ Compare St. Paul's Ep. to Tit. I. 5. See Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, p. 217, (Ed. 1838.)

¶ Biblioth. Max. Patrum, Tom. VIII. (Lug. 1677.)

and to the "ultima Thule" of the ancients*. But even if this were his meaning, we cannot attach much importance to the statement of a writer who lived 500 years after the time of St. Paul, and especially when it is expressed in the language of poetry, which is not always confined to the strict accuracy of historical truth. The fact is, however, that Venantius says no such thing of St. Paul, for immediately before this passage, he expressly refers to St. Paul's *pen*—"stylus ille"—and not to *himself*, as the subject of his description, and he thus explains that it is not the Apostle *personally*, but his *Writings* or *Epistles*, as forming a part of the New Testament, which had penetrated into Britain.

Here, then, we close this part of the evidence derived, from the Fathers of the Church. Perhaps you will be surprised to hear that I have brought before you *every passage of every author* who makes any allusion to this subject within 600 years after Christ, with the exception of one British historian, to whom I shall presently refer. I have not quoted any passages but such as are universally admitted to be genuine, and I have endeavored to give a correct view of the real meaning of each writer by a reference to the general argument, or to the whole context of the passage. The sum of their testimony is this, that Christianity was introduced into England before the close of the Second Century; but they are entirely silent as to the exact time at which, or the individual missionaries by whom, the inestimable blessing of Divine truth was first conveyed to the British shores. There is not one of them who refers the origin of the British Church to St. Paul, or to any other of the Apostles. And yet, I have here included all the "indisputable testimonies" which have been alleged in favor of St. Paul's mission to England, and have found the evidence utterly inconclusive, and therefore I fully agree with Dr. Lingard in the opinion, that "not one of them all has any real connexion with the question. Those which mention St. Paul, take no notice of Britain, and those which mention Britain, take no notice of St. Paul."†

* De Vita S. Martini, Lib. III. (Apud Biblioth. Max. Patrum, Tom. X.)

† Vol. I. 355.

So far, then, we have no direct information as to any particulars, and we must depend very much on the account of other writers for a correct view of the question. We are naturally led to inquire—What did British writers themselves say on the subject? or what was the general opinion received by tradition among the English people? And here, unfortunately there is a great want of written documents of a sufficiently early date, as there is no British author for more than 500 years after Christ, whose writings have come down to our times. The first British historian, whose works have been preserved, is Gildas, the Monk of Bangor, who lived about the middle of the Sixth Century. He wrote a celebrated work on the “Fall of Britain,” which contains a remarkable passage on this subject, though it does not give any particular account of the first Christian Missionaries in Britain. It is, indeed, very obscure, and greatly involved in the construction of the original Latin, but the sense of it seems to be expressed in the following translation—“In the meantime, Christ, the true Sun, afforded his rays, that is, the knowledge of his precepts, to *this Island* frozen with icy cold, and separated at a great distance from the visible Sun, shining, not from the temporal firmament, but from the supreme everlasting power of heaven. For we certainly know, that in the latter end of the reign of Tiberius, that Sun appeared to the whole world with his glorious beams, in which his religion was propagated without any impediment, against the will of the Roman Senate, death being threatened by that Prince to all who should inform against the soldiers of Christ. And although their religion was embraced with tepidity by the inhabitants of the country, yet it continued among some in its integrity, and among others less so, even till the persecution of Diocletian.”* Such is this famous passage, which has so much exercised the ingenuity of critics, antiquarians, and theologians. Immense importance has been attached to it by some writers, as being supposed to prove the foundation of the British Church in the very earliest times—indeed, some have thought, even in the reign of Tiberius himself, that is, before A. D. 37.† But it has been satisfactorily

* De Excid. Brit. Apud. Usser p. 3 (Stillingsfleet p. 4. Collier, Vol. I. p. 3.)

† Milton's History of England (Kenet, Vol. I. p. 22, Ed. 1719.) Cave's Ancient Church, p. 244.

proved* that Gildas here refers to a *double* shining of the Sun of Righteousness—in other words, a double propagation of Christianity—the one, *in the whole world*, in the time of Tiberius, and the other, *in the Island of Britain*, at a later period which is not clearly defined. The question is, what is that later period? Now, this depends on the meaning of the first word in the sentence—“*interea*”—“in the meantime”—and this again depends on the meaning of the preceding and following context of the passage. It has been confidently stated†, that Gildas was speaking of the events connected with the defeat of Queen Boadicea by the Romans, which happened A. D. 61; and consequently he has been understood to say that the Gospel was preached in Britain shortly before that time, which has been supposed to coincide with the interval between St. Paul’s two imprisonments at Rome. But there is no reason to think that this interpretation is really correct. The fact is, there is no distinct mention of Boadicea in Gildas. He had briefly referred to the subjugation of the Britons by the Romans, as well as to their rebellion and oppression by their victorious enemies, after which he gives the passage which has just been quoted, and then proceeds to describe the persecution of Diocletian. This word, then, is far too *general* to refer to any particular date—it includes the whole interval between these two events, and it is just as applicable to *any* year before the Fourth Century, as to the year 61.

We must pass, then, to the first and greatest, and indeed almost the only work which contains any authentic account of the early history of the Church of England—both British and Saxon—I mean, the “*Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*,” written by the Venerable Bede, in the beginning of the Eighth Century. The materials of this great work were derived from documents—from traditions—and from the personal knowledge of the author—and it is, in fact, the principal source from which all subsequent writers have drawn their accounts of the events of those

* Stillingfleet, p. 5.

† Ibid. p. 5. Collier, Vol. 1. p. 3. Henry’s History of Great Britain,

Vol. I. p. 136. (Ed. 1805.) Burgess (Churchman Armed, Vol. II. pp. 322, 359.)

times. I shall at once, then, give his account of the origin of the British Church. He says—"In the year from the Incarnation of our Lord 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus, the 14th from Augustus, obtained the Empire with his brother Aurelius Commodus, in whose time, when *Eleutherus* the holy man, was *Bishop of the Church of Rome*, *Lucius, King of Britain* sent a Letter to him beseeching him that by his command he might be made a Christian, and he immediately obtained the object of his pious request, and the Britons preserved the faith which they received, in its purity and integrity, in quiet peace, even till the time of the Emperor Diocletian."* We cannot now stop to enter into the various historical and chronological questions which have been raised with reference to King Lucius, and the conversion of his subjects by the Missionaries of Pope Eleutherus; but the account itself appears to be entitled to the highest degree of credit, notwithstanding the different circumstances that have been mentioned by different writers as to various particulars. There is, indeed, a striking resemblance between the latter part of this description and that of Gildas, with regard to the time of Diocletian, and this appears to me to confirm the supposition, that Gildas in reality refers in general terms to the same time as Bede, in his account of the Conversion of Britain. It is a remarkable fact, that Bede, who is the highest authority in these matters, never once assigns this event to a more ancient period than that of King Lucius—he never intimates that Britain had received the Gospel from St. Paul, or any of the Apostles, or of their immediate successors, and it is utterly incredible that, with all his learning and research, he could have been *ignorant* of such a thing, if it had really occurred, or have *omitted* it in his history, if he had known it. Let us see, then, how the case exactly stands. We find that all the accounts before him are vague and general—none of those writers enter into any particulars, and therefore we are compelled, for the want of more ancient records, to adopt his statement, especially as we find it confirmed by later authorities, and national traditions. It will be observed

* Bedæ Hist. Eccles. Lib. I. cap. iv. pp. 13, 14. (Ed. Hussey.)

at once, that his account is not, in the least, inconsistent with the earlier statements, as it merely supplies *additional* information omitted by these foreign writers, who do not profess to enter into the Church history of Britain, as they merely refer to it in illustration of their general argument, and might not have been acquainted with the particulars of the conversion of such a distant country; though it is certain that the very time mentioned by Bede fully coincides with all the notices relating to this point in the oldest Christian authors.

It has been objected, indeed, that "it was impossible that the British Church should have been planted by any Roman Missionaries, for during the three Centuries of persecution, no Bishop or Diocese was in a condition to think of distant Missionary enterprises."* But this is evidently reasoning from mere conjecture in opposition to historical proof, while it tacitly assumes the whole question, and confounds temporal prosperity with spiritual efficiency. Was it not during those Centuries of persecution that the Apostles and their successors were most active and zealous in their Missionary labors? And has it not always been the case, that the power of the Spirit of God is most conspicuous in triumphing over all human opposition, and accomplishing the greatest results by the weakest instruments? The truth is, that Christian Rome has been generally most enterprising and most successful in the work of foreign missions during the period of the greatest trial and danger at home—calmly and steadily she goes on, in faith and patience, in the midst of surrounding difficulties, just as it is said of the Pagan Empire, that "old Rome, in her greatest distress, sent her legions to foreign destinations by one gate, while the Carthaginian conqueror was at the other."†

It is by no means improbable, indeed, that there may have been *individual* Christians in Britain at a much earlier period than the time of Lucius, especially as we know that during the reign of the Emperor Claudius, and about the year 43, the power

* Hopkins's Answer to Milner, Vol. I. p. 316.

† Newman's Discourses, p. 182. (Am. Ed.)

of Pagan Rome had obtained a permanent settlement in the country*, and there must have been constant communication between Britain and Rome, the centre of Christianity at all times. There is, indeed, one individual, a Christian female, mentioned in Scripture, who is generally supposed to have been a British lady. Her name was Claudia, and the evidence is simply this: She is included, together with Pudens, among the salutations sent by St. Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy†, written from Rome, and consequently they were both Christians, residing in Rome at the time. Now, in the Works of Martial, a Roman poet, Pudens, a Roman senator, is described together with his wife Claudia, who was a native of Britain||, and from thence it is argued that they were the same persons with those mentioned by the Apostle. The coincidence is certainly remarkable, but it is by no means conclusive. The mere identity of names is surely not sufficient to establish the identity of individuals, especially as Martial was a heathen, and wrote nearly 40 years after Saint Paul, when it is not probable that both the parties would be still alive, and further, when it does not appear that the two persons named by St. Paul were man and wife, as they are separated from each other by the insertion of the name of Linus between them. Still less conclusive is the proof that Pomponia Græcina, who lived at the same time, was a British Christian, the only evidence as to her *nation* being that her husband was governor of Britain, and as to her *religion*, that she was accused of practising some foreign superstition‡, which has been supposed to refer to Christianity. These romantic stories, however, are scarcely entitled to any serious consideration, and we have certainly no direct evidence of the *general reception* of the Christian faith by any portion of the British nation before the conversion of Lucius, which must have taken place about the year of our Lord 180, and therefore he has been thought to be justly entitled to the honorable

* Henry's History, Vol. I. p. 186.

† 2 Tim. iv. 21.

|| Martial Epigram. Lib. iv. 13, xl. 54.

‡ Tacit. Annal, xiii. 32.

distinction of being the first Christian King in the world. And we may observe, that the circumstance of his mission to Rome seems strongly to confirm the opinion, that there was no Christian Church in Britain before his time, while it also affords a striking instance of the general belief in the Supremacy of the Apostolic See. We may state this point in the form of a dilemma. For, either there was a Church already founded in Britain, or there was not. If there *was*, why did he apply to the Pope for Christian instruction, instead of the Bishops of his own country? And if there *was not*, why did he apply to the Pope instead of the Bishops of the neighboring country of Gaul? In either case, we have a proof of homage offered to the See of Rome, and in one case we have a strong presumption against the existence of any Church in Britain at the time. It may be here remarked, that Pope Eleutherius, in whose time this event took place, was contemporary with St. Irenæus, and he is particularly mentioned by that Father, in his list of the primitive Bishops of Rome, as the 12th in succession from the Apostles*. And it is in immediate connexion with this passage that St. Irenæus bears that splendid testimony to the Primacy of the See of Rome, in which he declares that "with this Church, on account of her more powerful principality, it is necessary that every Church, that is, the faithful who are on all sides, should agree, in which the Apostolical Tradition has been always preserved by those who are on all sides."†

It appears, however, that the conversion of King Lucius is recorded by an older British writer, Nennius, Abbot of Bangor, in the early part of the Seventh Century, and though some of the circumstances mentioned by him are different from those of Bede, yet there is an essential agreement between the two narrative. Indeed, it is remarked by a learned Protestant historian, that "from Bede downwards, we have the concurrent testimony of abundance of historians for this matter of fact; this point was so uncontested a piece of history, that the English Ambassadors at the Council of Constance, pleaded Lucius's conversion against

* Lib. III. cap. iii. 3. p. 176

† Ibid. cap. iii. 2

the Ambassador of Castile, as an argument for precedence.”* And in further confirmation of this evidence, Archbishop Ussher mentions two very ancient Coins, one silver, and the other gold, both of which were struck in the time of some Christian Prince, as appears from their having the image of a king, and the sign of the Cross, impressed upon them, and though the inscription is almost effaced by time, they are found to be stamped with the first three letters of the name of King Lucius (LVC)†. And here I will refer to another curious document relating to this point in more modern times. It is an Extract from a Speech delivered just 300 years ago in the House of Lords, in London. It is entitled—“The Oration of the Reverend Father in God, Mr. Dr. Fecknam, Abbot of Westminster, in the Parliament House”—pronounced on a most memorable occasion, on the proposal of the Bill for the adoption of the English Liturgy, and the establishment of the Reformation, in the year 1559. The good Abbot ably defended the cause of the Catholic Church on three distinct grounds, and first, on the ground of its antiquity and universality. He then proceeds to apply these rules; and as his Speech has been preserved, I shall give a part of it in his own words, and in the original orthography. He says—“Concerninge the first Rule and Lesson, it cannot be truly affirmed or yet thought of any Man, that this new Religion, here nowe to be sett forthe in this Booke, hath bene observed in Christ’s Church of all Christian Men at all Tymes and in all Places; when the same hath ben observed only here in this Realme, and that for a shorte Tyme, as not much passing the space of two Yeres, and that in King Edward the 6th his Dayes: Whereas the Religion, and the very same maner of servinge and honoring of God, of the which you are at this present in Possession, did begin here in this Realme 1400 Yeres past in *Kinge Lucius’s Dayes*, the first Christian Kinge of this Realme; by whose humble Letters sent to the Pope *Elutherius*, he sent to this Realme two holye Monkes, the one called Damianus, the other Faganus: and they, as Embassadors, sent from the Sea Apostolike of Rome, did bringe into this Realme

* Collier, Vol. I. p. 12.

† Usser. pp. 39, 40.

so many Yeres past the very same Religion, wherof we are now in Possession; and that in the Latin Tongue, as the ancye[n]t Historiographer Gildas witnesseth in the Prologue and Begynnye of his Booke of the Brittaines—Historye. And the same Religion so longe ago begune, hath had this long Continuance ever sythence here in this Realme, not only of th' Inhabitaunce therof, but generally of all Christian Men, and in all Places of Christendom, untill the late Daies of Kinge Edward the 6th as is aforesaid."* Such was the last appeal of injured innocence—the last ineffectual attempt to maintain the rights of the Catholic Church in England, by a reference to the history of its first introduction into the country.

It is much to be regretted, indeed, that we have so little authentic information as to the early progress of the British Church for several Centuries after its foundation. We have nothing whatever recorded on this subject during the Third Century, with the exception of the general allusions already quoted from the Fathers. The next remarkable event connected with it was the Persecution of Diocletian, the last and greatest of all the attempts made by the Pagan Emperors to exterminate Christianity out of the world. It was the only one of them which extended to Britain, having reached the country about the year 303, when the Christians were exposed to all the fury of the heathen priests and magistrates. But the most illustrious of the sufferers was St. Alban, a citizen of Verulam, which has since been called after his name, St. Alban's, in Hertfordshire. He has the distinguished honor of being the first Christian Martyr in England. He was still a Pagan, when through compassion he opened his door to a Christian Priest, flying from his relentless persecutors, and his charity met with its appropriate reward. He admired the piety of the Priest, listened to his instructions, and received from him the Sacrament of Baptism. When the retreat of his guest was discovered, Alban, to save the life of his teacher, gave himself up to the soldiers in the attire of the Priest. When brought before the Judge, he confessed his real name, boldly acknowledged him-

* Strype's Annals, App. p. 24. (1st Fol. Ed.)

self a Christian, and refused to offer sacrifice to the gods. He was immediately condemned to death, and beheaded without the walls of Verulam, and on that spot a stately Church was afterwards erected to his memory*. His martyrdom was said to have been accompanied with several miraculous events, as related by Gildas and by Bede. On this subject I shall quote the remarks of Collier, who says—"As for St. Alban's miracles being attested by authors of such antiquity and credit, I do not see why they should be questioned. That miracles were wrought in the Church at this time of day, is clear from the writings of the ancients. To suppose there are no miracles but those in the Bible, is to believe too little. To imagine that God should exert his Omnipotence, and appear supernaturally for His servants in no place but Jewry, and in no age since the Apostles, is an unreasonable fancy."† While the Church celebrates the memory of St. Alban, she appoints, in the Roman Missal, three special Prayers to be used on his Festival, in which we pray that we may obtain the benefit of his constant intercession for us in Heaven‡. In the Roman Breviary, three of the Lessons for the day are taken from Bede's narrative of his martyrdom||—and in the ancient Salisbury Breviary, there is a Hymn appointed to be sung in the Office of the day, beginning with these words—

Ave, Protomartyr Anglorum !
Miles Regis Angelorum,
O Albane, Flos Martyrum !||

There are only two other British martyrs whose names have been preserved—Aaron and Julius, of Caerleon—but it is added by Bede, that "many others of both sexes suffered martyrdom in various places" during the persecution of Diocletian. Peace was restored shortly afterwards by the accession of Constantius to the Empire, and the British Church held frequent communication with other branches of the Catholic Church in Ecclesiastical deliberations. Three remarkable occasions of this kind are re-

* Bed. Lib. I. Cap. vii.

† Eccles. Hist. vol. I. p. 22.

‡ Miss. Rom. Angl. p. 4. (Ed. Mech. 1840.)

§ Brev. Rom. S. S. Angl. p. 10. (Ed. Mech. 1836.)

|| Usser. p. 148.

corded to have taken place during the Fourth Century, on which deputations of British Bishops attended at some of the great Councils of the Church. The first was at the Council of Arles in 314, at which there were three British representatives, the Bishops of York, London, and Lincoln. The second was at the Council of Sardica in 347, and the third was at the Council of Ariminum in 359.* Whether any of them was present at the great Council of Nice, in 325, cannot now be clearly ascertained, owing to the imperfect list of the Bishops which has come down to us, but it is generally believed, with great probability, that the British Church was represented there also†. In the Second Council of Alexandria, in 363, Britain is expressly named among the countries that had received the Decrees of the Council of Nice‡, and we have it on the authority of St. Athanasius, that the British Church was free from the errors of Arianism, which had overspread the Christian world§. And it may be added, that the connexion between the British and Foreign Churches is still further illustrated by the practice of pilgrimages, which were undertaken by British Christians to the Holy Land and other places, even at this early period, to which allusion is expressly made by St. Jerome¶ and by Theodoret¶¶. In the beginning of the Fifth Century, an attempt was made to disseminate the Pelagian heresy in the British Church, which, though partially successful, was ultimately defeated by the blessing of God upon the mission of Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who came over to the country on two occasions, to assist in the refutation of heresy, and the defence of the faith. His first visit is said to have taken place in the year 429, when he was accompanied by Lupus, Bishop of Troyes, while the second time, several years afterwards, his companion was Severus, of Treves. It is stated that the Britons received the Missionaries with joy, crowds

* Collier, Vol. I. pp. 25, 30, 37.

† Stillingfleet, p. 89.

‡ Labb et Cossart. Concil. Tom. II. p. 825.

§ S. Athan. Opp. Tom. I. p. 309.

¶ S. Hieron. Opp. Tom. I. p. 44.

¶¶ Theodor. Opp. Vol. III. p. 881.

followed them wherever they went—they preached in Churches, streets, and fields, and so great was the enthusiasm which they excited, that the teachers of the new doctrines hesitated to confront them in public*. Thus the triumph of orthodoxy was complete, and the “enemies of grace” (as Prosper informs us) “natives of the soil, were banished from the Island.”† To explain this language, it is to be observed that the Pelagians denied the great doctrine of original sin, and the necessity of the internal grace of God in the soul of man; and it is well known that Pelagius himself was a native of Wales, his original name being Morgan, which was translated into the Greek name of Pelagius, while his principal associate in heresy, Celestius, was, I am sorry to say, a native of Ireland‡.

It appears, however, that the Pelagian errors were not yet completely extirpated from the British Church. In the Sixth Century, another attempt was made to revive them, and, in opposition to it, the principal event of which we have any information is the Synod of Bishops, Abbots, Clergy, and Laity, held in the year 519, at a place called Brevi (in Cardiganshire), and shortly afterwards at Victoria, under the presidency of the celebrated St. David, the Patron Saint of Wales||. The translation of the Archiepiscopal See from Caerleon to Menevia was also confirmed on that occasion, and it is further stated by Giraldus Cambrensis (who lived in the 12th Century) that the Decrees of both these Synods were approved by the Roman Church, and that they formed the rule and standard of the whole Church in Wales§.

Here, then, we conclude this brief outline of the early history of the British Church, previous to the mission of Augustine from Rome. But there is a very important inquiry to which I must now refer, in connexion with this subject. It is this. Did the ancient

* Bed. Hist. Eccles. Lib. I. cap. xvii, xxi.

† Contra Cassian. cap. 41. p. 113.

‡ Usser. pp. 207, 208.

|| Usser. pp. 81, 473.—Collier, Vol. I. p. 56.

§ Girald. Vit. S. David.

British Church acknowledge the Supremacy of the Pope, or was it independent of the authority of Rome? It has been strongly asserted, that "the connexion of Rome with Britain began with Pope Gregory the Great,"* but the truth of this assertion must be tested by historical facts, which may be fairly stated in the following considerations:—

1. We have seen that the Christian Church in Britain was founded by Roman Missionaries, and this circumstance forms, in itself, a strong *presumptive* argument in favor of its continued submission to the Holy See. It is true that, owing to the want of ancient documents, we have no direct testimony transmitted to us, in order to establish this view of the question, but there are other facts of an indirect nature, which ought to be quite sufficient to decide the point. For it must be observed, that we have *no evidence to the contrary*, with the exception of some trifling difference as to the time of Easter, which is capable of a satisfactory explanation on other principles; and therefore, in the absence of positive proof, we are surely justified in assuming that the British Church regarded the Bishop of Rome with the same degree of reverence and submission as the other Churches throughout the Catholic world, whose devotion to the Apostolic See has been placed beyond all doubt, by their own recorded declarations.

2. But further, we find that this conclusion is confirmed by the Acts of the Councils at which the British Bishops were present, and which were sanctioned by their subscription and approbation. Now, there are two inferences to be drawn from these facts, which are thus admirably stated by a learned Divine—"1st, that the British Church formed an integral part of the Universal Church, agreeing in doctrine and discipline with the other Christian Churches. 2nd, that the Acts and Declarations of these Councils may be taken as the Acts and Declarations of the British Bishops, and therefore as expressions of the belief and practice of the British Church."† It must be admitted that the evidence of these early Councils is rather of a circumstantial and

* Hopkins's Answer to Milner, Vol. I. p. 316.

† Lingard, Vol. I. p. 372.

incidental character, for there was no formal definition pronounced on a question of authority that had never been disputed in the Church; but so far as it goes, it clearly corroborates the view, that the Supremacy of the See of St. Peter was fully recognised by these Councils which affirmed it—by the British Bishops who assisted at them—and by the British Church, which was represented by them. Thus, for instance, at the Council of Arles, the assembled Fathers agreed upon a Letter, addressed “to the most beloved and most glorious Pope Sylvester”—they sent to the Pope a copy of the Decrees passed by them, for his approbation, and they expressed their sentiments in this language—“We heartily wish, most beloved Brother, that you had been present at this great spectacle, but you could not leave *those places where the Apostles preside*, and where their blood continually renders glory to God. And we have judged that, *according to the ancient usage*, it belongs especially to *you who have the great Dioceses under your charge*, to communicate these things to all the Churches.”* They here regret the unavoidable absence of the Pope himself from their deliberations, while at the same time they refer to Rome as the “place where the Apostles preside,” and to the Bishop of Rome as invested with the government of the Universal Church. This Synodical Letter is signed by the Bishops of York, London, and Lincoln, and thus shows that the British Church could not have rejected the authority of the Pope at the beginning of the 4th Century. Again, there is a more unequivocal testimony from the Council of Sardica, which has been always considered supplementary to that of Nice. In their Address to Pope Julius, the Fathers employ these terms—“It will appear to be best and most proper, if the Bishops from each particular Province report to *their Head, that is, the See of the Apostle Peter*.”† Now, it is evident that this expression cannot refer merely to the *Patriarchal* power of the Pope, as it includes “each particular Province,” and therefore acknowledges him as the visible Head of the Catholic Church. And moreover, we find

* Summa Conell., Tom. II. p. 27. (Ed. Par. 1672.)

† Labb. et Cossart. Concil. Tom. II. p. 690.

that appeals to Rome were established by this Council in the 3rd, 4th, and 7th Canons, in the case of Bishops who were condemned by Provincial Synods*, and these documents were also signed and approved by the British Bishops, who thus expressed their own concurrence, with that of the Church which they represented, in the acknowledgment of the claims of St. Peter's successor in the See of Rome.

3. There is also another historical circumstance, which must not be omitted, as forming an important part of the evidence on this point. I alluded before to the mission of St. Germanus into Britain, to oppose the progress of the Pelagian heresy in that country. But by whom was he sent? On this point we have the evidence of St. Prosper, who lived at the time, and was afterwards Secretary to Pope Leo. He says in his "Chronicle,"— "*Pope Celestine sends Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, in his own stead, in order that he might drive out the heretics and guide the Britons into the Catholic Faith.*"† Here Germanus is described as the Pope's Deputy and representative, and acting by his authority, in undertaking a voyage from France for the preservation of the faith in England. And we may here refer to a curious Poem of St. Prosper, in which he describes the progress of Pelagianism, and of the Councils held in opposition to it in the 5th Century. Among these the first place is assigned to Rome, as the See of St. Peter, and the Head of the Episcopal order throughout the world—

Pestem subeuntem prima recidit
Sedes Roma Petri, quæ Pastoralis honoris
Facta caput mundo, quidquid non possidet armis
Religionem tenet‡.

Such was the position of the See of Rome, as the divinely appointed guardian of the faith, and such was the unremitting care of the Pope to preserve the Gospel of the grace of God in all its primitive purity, in the British Church. And it must not be forgotten, that it is this same Pope Celestine, to whom our own

* Labb. et Cossart. Concil. Tom. II. p. 623.

† Chron. ad an. 429. (Inter S. Aug. Opp. Tom. X. p. 128. App. Ed. Ben.)

‡ Lib. De Ingrat. (Ibid. p. 66.)

country is indebted for the blessings of Christianity, as it is well known that it was he who, in the exercise of his Apostolical authority, sent on his great mission to the Emerald Isle the glorious St. Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland.

Here, then, we have the general facts of history, which bear upon this important point, and which cannot be counterbalanced by any contrary facts on the opposite side of the question. And yet, this is precisely the period to which the modern historians of the Church of England triumphantly appeal, in proof of the Independence of the British Church, and by which many of the High Churchmen of the Anglican School, while professing to hold the great principles of Catholic unity, endeavor to justify their present position of continued separation from the See of Rome. Nothing, surely, but the most inveterate national prejudice could have suggested the assertion of that eminent English lawyer, Sir William Blackstone, who confidently states, that "the Ancient British Church, by whomsoever planted, was a stranger to the Bishop of Rome, and his pretended authority*."

As to other important points of doctrine, there are several further particulars incidentally stated by Gildas, which show the agreement of the ancient Church of Britain with the modern Church of Rome. Thus it appears from his narrative, that their Hierarchy consisted of Bishops, Priests, and other Ministers, who were regarded as the successors of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and bearer of the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven—that they sat in his seat, and inherited his power of binding and loosing—and that it was their duty to teach the people, and to offer sacrifice, with their hands extended over the most holy sacrifices of Christ. He says also that the Britons had Monasteries, inhabited by Monks under their Abbot, and bound by the three monastic vows. It appears, further, that they built Churches in honor of the martyrs—that there were several Altars, which he calls the seats of the heavenly sacrifice, in the same Church—that the Service was chanted by the Clergy in the Church, and in the Latin Tongue—that their translation of the Scriptures was the same as that now

* Commentaries, B. iv. c. 8.

called the Old Italic Version—that they sung the Psalms from a Version made from that of the Septuagint, the same which is still used in the Catholic Church—and that they quoted the Books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, as of equal authority with the other Canonical Books of Scripture*. These are facts stated by one of themselves, who lived and wrote 1000 years before the Reformation, without any controversial object in view, and from them there can be no difficulty in determining whether the ancient British Church was Catholic or Protestant, long before the foundation of the Anglo-Saxon Church in England.

II. But I must now proceed to make a few remarks on the other great branch of the subject, relative to the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Pagans, or foreign conquerors of Britain, who, having been invited into the country about the middle of the 5th Century, to aid the original inhabitants against their powerful enemies, the Picts and Scots, had turned their victorious arms against their unsuspecting allies, and thus had effected a permanent settlement in the land. It is scarcely necessary, however, to enter into any formal proofs on this head, as it is universally admitted that their conversion was accomplished by means of the mission of St. Augustine from Rome, who was sent for this purpose by Pope Gregory the Great, in the year 596, and was afterwards consecrated the first Archbishop of Canterbury. We have here, indeed, a striking instance of that exercise of universal jurisdiction, on the part of the Pope, which would be considered in the present day as an act of "Papal aggression," and denounced as an unwarrantable interference with the liberties of the country and the independence of the Church. It has been said, indeed, that the mission of St. Augustine was an act of intrusion upon the rights of the British Church, and yet that Church had never attempted the conversion of their heathen neighbors, while it does not appear that there was a single person professing Christianity among all the Saxons in England†. Gildas gives a melancholy picture of the degenerate state of the British Church in his time,

* Lingard. Vol. I. p. 365.

† Carwithen's Church of England, Vol. I. p. 3.

as to the corrupt lives of the Clergy and Laity, with some few bright exceptions of individuals, "the holiness of whose lives he prizes above all the wealth of this world"*—and Bede remarks that, in addition to the many sins of the Britons so lamentably described by Gildas, their historian, there was another to be laid to their charge, that of "neglecting to preach the Word of Faith to the Saxons or English, who inhabited Britain with themselves."† This want of Missionary zeal was, indeed, a sad evidence of the low state of spiritual life in this declining Church, though the nation had been among them for nearly 150 years before the arrival of Augustine.

It is well known that Gregory himself, while he was yet a Benedictine Monk, had fully resolved on undertaking a personal journey as a Missionary to England, but the people of Rome were unwilling to be deprived of his services, and prevented his departure from the eternal city. It is said that his compassion for their spiritual condition was first excited by seeing some Anglo-Saxon slaves exposed for sale in the public market at Rome. Their beauty attracted his attention, and on finding that they were heathens, he deeply lamented that those who were gifted with forms so fair should be possessed by the Prince of Darkness, and excluded from the grace of God‡. From that time he set his heart on the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, and never rested till it was successfully accomplished. And it may be here observed, that Protestant writers have fallen into a strange inconsistency in referring to the authority of Pope Gregory, as a witness both *for* and *against* the Papal Supremacy. When they attempt to account for the introduction of the Roman Catholic system into England, they refer to the mission of Augustine, by command of Gregory the Great—and again, when they attempt to prove that the Supremacy was unknown in the 6th Century, they refer to the language of Gregory the Great, in which he rejects the title of "Universal Bishop," and assumes that of "Servant of the Servants of God." But there is no real

* Lingard, Vol. I p. 359.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. Lib. I. cap. xxii.

‡ Ibid. Lib. II. cap. i.

difference, the one being an act of *official* position, and the other of *personal* humility; and indeed, it is a remarkable expression incidentally* employed by Bede, with reference to Pope Gregory, in which he states that "he held the Pontifical authority *over the whole world.*"*

Augustine was prior of a Benedictine Monastery at Rome, when he was appointed to the arduous mission of preaching the Gospel to the Anglo-Saxon Idolators, which he undertook in company with a body of forty Monks, and thus Christianity and Monasticism were introduced into England at the same time. The Kingdom of Kent seemed to be the most favorable of all the dominions comprised in the Saxon Heptarchy, for the commencement of their labors. Ethelbert was King of Kent, and his Queen Bertha was a Christian, when Augustine and his companions landed in the Isle of Thanet, and sent a messenger to inform the King that they had arrived from Rome, to announce the way of everlasting happiness to him and his subjects. The King consented to receive the Missionaries, not in his own palace, but in the open air, with the view of defeating, on a principle of Druidical superstition, the effect of their supposed enchantments. The Missionaries approached the appointed place with the slow and solemn pomp of a religious procession; and it is particularly mentioned by Bede, that they carried before them, as a standard, a silver cross, together with a painted image of our Saviour, while at the same time they chanted the Litany, and prayed for the eternal salvation of themselves and the English people. Their prayers were granted, their preaching was successful, Ethelbert received Christian Baptism at the Feast of Pentecost, in the year 597, and his example was followed on the next Christmas, by 10,000 Saxons†. There is reason, indeed, to believe that Augustine was divinely favored with the gift of miraculous powers, in proof of his mission, as we find the fact directly stated by Bede‡, distinctly admitted by Pope Gregory§,

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. cap. 1.

† S. Greg. Opp. Epist. Lib. VIII. Ind. i. Ep. 30. Tom. II. p. 918. (Ed. Ben.)

‡ Hist. Eccles. Lib. I. cap. xxvi. xxxi. Lib. II. II.

§ Opp. Epist. Lib. IX. Ind. iv. Ep. 23, Tom. II. p. 1110.

and expressly affirmed in the monumental inscription on the tomb of the Archbishop.* The following is the epitaph recorded by Bede—"Here rests our Lord Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, who was formerly directed hither by Blessed Gregory, Pope of the City of Rome, and having been favored by God with the working of miracles, converted King Ethelbert and his nation from the worship of idols to the faith of Christ, and having finished the days of his office in peace, died on the 7th day before the Kalends of June, during the reign of the same King." It is further mentioned by the same historian, that immediately after his first interview with the Missionaries, the King granted them a mansion in the City of Canterbury, and he then describes their mode of life in their new abode in the following language—"On their entrance into the mansion given them, they began to imitate the Apostolical life of the Primitive Church, in observing constant prayers, vigils, and fasts, in preaching the Word of life to all they could, in despising everything belonging to this world as foreign to them, receiving from those whom they instructed only what was necessary for their sustenance, living in all things according to what they taught, and having a mind ready to suffer any adversities, and even death itself, for the truth which they preached. In consequence, many believed and were baptized, admiring the simplicity of their innocent life, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine. There was, moreover, near the city to the East, a Church which had been built in ancient times in honor of St. Martin, while the Romans yet occupied Britain, in which the Queen, who, as we mentioned before, was a Christian, was in the habit of praying. In this Church, therefore, they first began to meet, to sing, to pray, to say Mass, to preach, and to baptize, until, after the King's conversion to the faith, they received greater liberty of preaching, and of building or restoring Churches."†

But we must now briefly refer to another important point, relative to the connexion of this Mission with the *British* Church in

* Hist. Eccles. Lib. II, cap. iii.

† Ibid. Lib. I. cap. xxvi.

England. Augustine had received full authority from the Pope to exercise jurisdiction, not only over the Anglo-Saxon Church, but also over all the British Bishops. The extent of his jurisdiction was thus defined by the Pope—"We commit all the Bishops of Britain to your Fraternity, that the unlearned may be instructed, the weak confirmed by exhortations, and the perverse corrected by your authority."* And again—"Your Fraternity will have not only the Bishops whom you may ordain, and those who may be ordained by the Bishop of York, but also all the Priests of Britain, subject to you by the authority of Jesus Christ, our God and our Lord."† This is surely the language of one who believed himself invested with a divine commission to provide for the spiritual government of the Church, without invading the just prerogatives of any secular or ecclesiastical authorities. In consequence of this commission, Augustine made an appointment to meet the Bishops in friendly conference, to settle various points of discipline, and to make arrangements with them for the prosecution of their Missionary labors. As the Britons had been driven by the Saxons into the mountains of Wales, he was anxious to suit their convenience in the choice of a locality, and accordingly the place of meeting was that afterwards called "Austin's Oak," probably Austclive in Gloucestershire, where several "Bishops or Doctors" were assembled to receive the new Archbishop, whom they regarded with some feelings of jealousy and suspicion. Some difficulty was experienced in his first interview with them, in which he requested their aid in the conversion of the Pagan Saxons, and required their conformity with the usages of the Universal Church. Accordingly a second interview took place between Augustine, and Seven Bishops, accompanied with other learned men, when he finally reduced his demands to these three heads—1. That the Britons should celebrate the Feast of Easter at the proper season. 2. That they should complete the administration of Baptism after the manner of the Holy Roman and Apostolic Church. 3. That they should join with him in preaching the Word of God to the

* S. Greg. Opp. Epist. Lib. XI. Ind. iv. Ep. 64. Tom. II. p. 1137.

† Ibid. Epist. 65. Tom. II. p. 1164.

English nation.* They refused, however, to accede to these terms, or to acknowledge him as their Archbishop, because, as Bede reports their views, they argued that he had exhibited certain marks of pride and ambition in his mode of receiving them on that occasion. But it is of great importance to attend to these terms proposed by Augustine, because they afford a satisfactory refutation of the opinion, that the British Church differed from him and the Church of Rome on some point of doctrine, or on the authority of the Pope, though it is obvious that if there had been such a difference, he would surely never have asked them to assist him in preaching the Gospel to the Saxon idolators, as he could evidently have had no confidence in the orthodoxy of their teaching. I confess I am astonished to find such respectable authors as Stillingfleet†, Collier‡, and Bingham||, asserting, in their account of the conference, what has often since been repeated, that one of the conditions stated by Augustine was, that they should acknowledge the Supremacy of the Pope, and the authority of the Church of Rome. This, however, is merely substituting an inference for a fact, as there is not the slightest allusion to such a subject in the narrative of Bede, nor is there the least intimation of any difference of doctrine between the Roman and British Churches. It was purely a question of *discipline*, which involved, in itself, no article of the *faith*, and which chiefly related to the proper time of the celebration of Easter. It would be tedious to enter into a particular history of this point, but it is sufficient to remark that the difference was merely *chronological*, and not *theological*; for though the time of Easter had been settled by the Council of Nice, still it depended on astronomical calculations as to the Paschal Moon, for which purpose the Britons had retained the use of an old and incorrect cycle, which had been superseded by an improved system adopted by the Church of Rome; but their communication with the rest of Christendom had been greatly interrupted since the termination of the Roman power, and the establishment of Saxon

*Bede. Eccles. Hist. Lib. II. cap. ii.

† Orig. Brit. p. 357.

‡ Eccles. Hist. vol. I. p. 76.

|| Orig. Eccles. Book IX. chap. i. sec. 11, 12,

dominion in the country, and thus, in their tenacity in observing the customs of their fathers, they certainly did not act with proper submission to the Apostolic See, as represented by Augustine, while they obstinately adhered to their national traditions*. But the truth is, that their opposition to Augustine was entirely of a *personal* and *political* nature, as it is evident from Bede, that it arose from a prejudice which they had entertained against him, because they thought that he did not treat them with proper respect in not rising from his seat to receive them, and also from their national enmity against the Saxons, with whom he was now associated in religion†.

There is, indeed, a certain document frequently quoted, which is said to contain the answer of Dinoh, the Abbot of Bangor, to the demands of Augustine, in which he refuses, on the part of the British Church, to acknowledge the supreme authority of the Pope. Now, if this document were really genuine, it might occasion some serious difficulty, but, fortunately, it is now generally agreed that it is a forgery of modern invention. It was first published by Sir Henry Spelman in 1639‡, and afterwards inserted in Wilkins' Collection of British Councils§, but all internal and external evidence are against it, and it is quite inconsistent with the account of Bede and the ancient historians. This answer is said to have been expressed in the following terms—"Be it known and certain to you, that we are, all and singular, obedient and subject to the Church of God, and to the Pope of Rome, and to every pious Christian, to love each one in his degree with perfect charity, and to assist each one of them, by word and deed, to become the sons of God. And other obedience than this I do not know to be claimed and demanded as due to him whom you name the Pope or Father of Fathers, but we are prepared to give and to pay this obedience to him and to every Christian for ever. Besides, we are under the government of the Bishop of Caerleon upon Usk, who is the Superintendent, under God, over

* Lingard, Vol. I. p. 50.

† Bed. Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. cap. ii.

‡ Concilia Orb. Brit. Vol. I. p. 108.

§ Concilia Mag. Brit. Vol. I. p. 26.

us, to make us observe the spiritual way."* This document is founded entirely on the authority of a MS. which Sir H. Spelman says he had from Mr. Peter Mostin, a Welsh gentleman, and which is now deposited in the British Museum†. But there is no confirmation of it to be found in any other historical documents, and it betrays its origin by its anachronism, in referring to the Bishop of Caerleon as the Metropolitan of the British Churches, when it is well ascertained that the Metropolitan See had been removed to Menevia or St. David's, long before the time of Augustine—as well as by the modern dialect of its language, which is pronounced by a learned Antiquarian to be that of the 15th Century‡.

Some persons, however, have argued, without the slightest historical evidence, in favor of the *Oriental* origin of the British Church, on the ground of a supposed resemblance between them in the time of the celebration of Easter§. But there are two important facts, which entirely destroy the force of this conjecture. One is, that the British practice on this point was *originally the same with the Roman*||—both having been founded on the Astronomical Cycle in general use in the early ages—and the other is, that this practice was *never the same with that of the Primitive Asiatic Churches*, which observed Easter on the same day as the Jewish Pasch, on the 14th day of the month, on whatever day of the week it might fall (from which circumstance they were called Quartodecimans) while the British Churches always kept the Feast of Easter on Sunday, between the 14th and 20th days of the month¶. But the fact is, that in the lapse of ages, they had lost the true *reckoning* of the time of Easter, and consequently, it is certain that their custom, during the 6th and 7th centuries

* Parker's Antiq. Brit. Eccles. (Ed. Drake.) p. 592.

† Collier, Vol. I. p. 76.

‡ Lingard, Vol. I. p. 71. Kenrick on the Primacy, p. 252. (3d Ed.) Ives' Trials, p. 223.

§ Fox, Vol. I. p. 137. Moshem. De Reb. Christ. p. 216. Burton's Lectures. p. 442. (4th Ed.)

|| Lingard, Vol. I. p. 51, 52.

¶ Bed. Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. 2. III. 4. 17.

was different from that of all other Churches in the world, as it was in opposition, not only to the Decrees of the Roman Pontiff, but also to the practice of the Universal Church, and to the Canons of the General Council of Nice, as well as to the rule agreed to by their own representatives at the Council of Arles, the 1st Canon of which enacts, that the Feast of Easter be observed on the same day throughout the whole world, and that notice of the day be given by the Pope to all the Churches*.

On the whole, then, there is no reason whatever to question the uniform attachment of the ancient British Church to the See of Rome, at every period of its existence. It was certainly Roman in its origin, doctrine, and worship—in its communion with foreign Councils which recognised the Supremacy of the Pope—and in its submission to the authority of the Pope's representative, who was sent into the country on an important mission; while even the apparent difference about Easter was merely founded on local custom and national tradition, and the controversy itself had entirely disappeared, and every trace of their former irregularity was completely obliterated, before the end of the 8th Century†. It must be remembered, however, that the history of the Church of England properly commences with the foundation of the *Anglo-Saxon* Church in the 6th Century, and not with the conversion of the *Britons* at any preceding period. If the external identity of a Church consists in the succession of her Bishops, and the lineal descent of her people, then the present Established Church may be regarded as a continuation of the *Saxon*, while she has no real connexion with the *British* Church, which in the course of the following ages was completely amalgamated with the national Church under every stage of her political existence‡. It cannot be denied, then, that the Church of England was founded by the Pope, and continued in allegiance to the Apostolic See till the time of Henry VIII.—from the year 597 till 1534—and those who maintain that she was corrupt before the

* Labb. et Cossart. Concil. Tom. I. p. 1421.

† Lingard, Vol. I. p. 63.

Wilberforce on Church Authority, p. 295. (Am. Ed.)

Reformation must also admit that she was corrupt *from the beginning**, as it is perfectly clear that till the 16th Century, the Christian Church had never existed in England, but in full communion with the See of Rome.

I shall conclude this part of the subject with a reference to two documents of the highest authority among Catholics, which incidentally contain a brief allusion to the ancient history of the English Church. One of these is an Apostolical Letter from the late Pope Gregory XVI., addressed to John, Earl of Shrewsbury, as President of the Catholic Institute of Great Britain, in which the Pope, after expressing his gratification at the formation of such an Association, thus proceeds:—"You can easily understand, beloved Son, the reason why such joy should have been felt by us, who have been, by divine appointment, constituted the heir of the Name and Chair of that Gregory the Great, who, by the torch of the Catholic Faith, first enlightened Britain, involved in the darkness of Idolatry. We are encouraged to entertain the cheering hope, that the light of Divine Truth will again shine with the same brightness as of old, upon the minds of the British people. We desire nothing with greater earnestness than to embrace once more with paternal exultation the English nation, adorned with so many and such excellent qualities, and to receive back the long lost sheep into the Fold of Christ."† The other of these documents is the celebrated Apostolical Letter of his present Holiness, Pope Pius IX., for the re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in England. After referring to the power of ruling the Universal Church, committed by our Lord to the Roman Pontiff, he thus refers to former times—"Amongst other nations, the famous Realm of England hath experienced the effects of this solicitude, on the part of the Supreme Pontiff. Its historians testify, that in the earliest ages of the Church, the Christian Religion was brought into Britain, and subsequently flourished greatly there; but, about the middle of the Fifth Age, the Angles and the Saxons having been invited into the Island, the affairs

* Parker's Antiq. Brit. Eccles. pp. 53, 67.

† Apostolical Letter, pp. 1, 2.

not only of the nation, but of religion also, suffered great and grievous injury. But we know that our holy predecessor, Gregory the Great, sent first Augustine the Monk, with his companions, who subsequently, with several others, were elevated to the dignity of Bishops, and a great company of Priests, Monks, having been sent to join them, the Anglo-Saxons were brought to embrace the Christian Religion, and by their exertions it was brought to pass that in Britain, which had now come to be called England, the Catholic Religion was every where restored and extended."*

Such was Catholic England in her early days of faith and love, and such she continued to be during the long ages that followed, before she was severed by the rude hand of violence from the centre of Catholicity. It is, indeed, a most encouraging fact, that many of the brightest Saints who have ever adorned the Catholic Church by their piety and learning were members of the English Church, and in one instance—the only one on record—the highest dignity in the Church, the Papal throne itself, was filled by an Englishman, in the person of Pope Adrian IV., whose former name was Nicholas Breakspear, who occupied the chair of St. Peter from the year 1154, till 1159†. Those were the good old times, when Catholic England sent forth her sons, under the authority of the Holy See, to be employed in the propagation of the Faith, as zealous Missionaries, in the conversion of the other nations of the earth—those were the times when the glorious Cathedrals of old England first rose majestically to heaven, pointing upwards to the skies in every feature of their Gothic Architecture, and still remaining in the midst of a Protestant country, as so many splendid monuments of the piety and munificence of former ages, while even the venerable ruins and "ivy-mantled towers" of the ancient Abbeys are ever reminding us of the faith and worship which once lived enshrined within those sacred walls, which were originally erected to perpetuate the memory of religion and the honor of

* Cramp's Text Book, p. 544. (3rd Ed.)

† Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Vol. II, p. 421. (Ed. 1850.)

Almighty God, in the Catholic Church. And yet those were the times when, it is said, the whole Church had fallen into the grossest idolatry and apostacy from the Faith of Christ—those were the times which John Milton, the Poet, describes in one of his Sonnets, in language of stern denunciation, as the times

“When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones.”

And such is still the opinion of the Catholic Religion, entertained by many intelligent Protestants in the present day. But surely it is high time that our separated brethren should understand what are the real doctrines and principles of the Catholic Church, and no longer allow themselves to be deceived by those calumnies and misrepresentations which have been transmitted from generation to generation, with the view of pouring contempt upon the Holy Spouse of the Immaculate Lamb, for refusing to surrender the sacred deposit of the faith committed to her trust. My object this evening is to show you that the true Church of England is not to be found in the religious Establishment which was formed 300 years ago by Act of Parliament, but in that branch of the Christian Church which was first planted in the country nearly 1700 years ago by the authority of the See of Rome, as part of the “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church” of Christ. I plead the cause of the old religion and the old Church of England, to which we are indebted for whatever is noble and chivalrous in our national history, whatever is great and glorious in our national institutions, whatever is sacred and beautiful in our national monuments. Meanwhile the eyes of all Christendom are directed towards Protestant England, and the prayers of thousands are continually ascending to heaven night and day for the conversion of that great country to her ancient faith, and we are all earnestly invited to unite our fervent prayers with theirs, that it may please God to enlighten the minds of the English people by the gracious influence of His Holy Spirit, and to grant that England may be speedily restored to the unity of the Catholic Church, and take her place once more among the nations of Catholic Europe.

